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Message Text

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PAGE 01 KIGALI 00543 042039Z

16
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3157
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR RW BY
SUBJ: VISIT OF BURUNDI PRESIDENT MICOMBERO: RECONCILIATION AT THE TOP

1. ARRIVING KIGALI SEPT 27 ON PRIVATE VISIT BURUNDI PRESIDENT MICOMBERO SET TONE OF HIS STAY IN RAMBLING KIRUNDI SPEECH IN WHICH HE SALUTED OLD SCHOOL CHUMS, CITED COMMON CULTURAL TIES, QUOTED KINYARWANDA AND KIRUNDI PROVERBS AND PRAISED PRES. HABYARIMANA FOR BRINGING "PEACE AND UNITY" TO RWANDA, AT HIS DEPARTURE SIX DAYS LATER, CULTURAL COMMONALITIES AND HISTORIC TIES WERE CITED IN FINAL COMMUNIQUE (TEXT BEING POUCHED) IN WHICH TWO CHIEFS OF STATE AGREED ADOPT COMMON MEASURES TO FACILITATE CONTACT BORDER POPULATIONS, DISCOURAGE SUBVERSIVE ACTS BY "RESIDENTS" IN EITHER COUNTRY, ACHIEVE REGIONAL COOPERATION IN INDUSTRY, TRANSPORT, COMMERCE AND TOURISM, AND TO MEET REGULARLY. PRES. HABYARIMANA ALSO ACCEPTED INVITATION VISIT BURUNDI (AT LEAST BY EARLY 1975).

2. PRES. MICOMBERO'S AGENDA INCLUDED HUNTING TRIP AT GABIRO LODGE, TRIP TO HIS OLD SCHOOL AT
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NYAKIBANDA NEAR BUTARE, AN EVENING ALONG LAKE KIVU AT

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KIBUYE AND A STAG DIPLOMATIC DINNER OCT 1. RADIO
EDITORIALS EQUATED "FRATERNAL" UNITY (RWANDA-BURUNDI) WITH
INTERNAL RWANDAN UNITY.

3. SECURITY PRECAUTIONS HEAVIEST EVER SEEN IN KIGALI.
ON ARRIVAL,MICOMBERO HELICOPTERED FROM AIRPORT TO KIGALI
ARMY BASE AND FROM THERE WAS ESCORTED EVERYWHERE IN
HEAVILY GUARDED CONVOY. PRESENCE OF TOP BURUNDI SECURITY
OFFICERS ROAMING FREELY AROUND KIGALI DISCONCERTING TO
MANY RWANDAN HUTUS AND ESPECIALLY TO BURUNDI REFUGEE ELITE.
BUT CONTRARY TO WHAT EMB UNDERSTANDS TO BE DEMAND OF BURUNDI
SECURITY AS PRECONDITION FOR MICOMBERO'S VISIT, NO
REFUGEES WERE JAILED OR PUT UNDER RESTRICTIVE CONTROL.
DEPARTURE WAS MORERELAXED WITH MOTORCADE TO AIRPORT
BASED ON RWANDAN SECURITY ASSESSMENT THAT REFUGEES WERE
ORDERLY.

4. COMMENT: MICOMBERO'S VISIT HAS UNDERLINED NORMALIZA-
TION RWANDA-BURUNDI RELATIONS AND BROUGHT REAL COMFORT
TO RWANDAN TUTSI WHO SEE IT AS FURTHER GUARANTEE
HABYARIMANA'S POLICY OF TOLERANCE. HOWEVER, IT CAUSED
QUITE A STIR IN OTHER KIGALI CIRCLES. BURUNDI REFUGEES,
OF COURSE, THINK IT IS AN OMINOUS SIGN. MANY OF THE
KIGALI BUREAUCRATS GIVEN TWO HOUR LEAVE TO GO TO THE
AIRPORT TO PAY A GOODBYE SALUTE TO MICOMBERO MADE IT A
POINT NOT TO SHOW UP--RATHER UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE
SECOND REPUBLIC WHICH PRIDES ITSELF ON ITS WELCOME TO
INTERNATIONAL VISITORS. THERE ARE ALSO RUMORS THAT
MICOMBERO'S VISIT HAS CAUSED RIFT WITHIN ARMY HIGH
COMMAND SOME OF WHOM FEEL HABYARIMANA BEING TOO FRIENDLY
AND PLIABLE IN HIS POLICY OF "OVERTURE".
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